

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

**"Heart disease runs in some families.
Addiction runs in ours."**



<https://www.drugabuse.gov>

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"Matt's" family has a history of addiction. He realizes he and other relatives may be more likely to become addicted. (This story is based on the experiences of real people whose names have been changed.)



Heart disease runs in some families. Addiction runs in ours. My dad is a

recovering alcoholic. He remembers his father was an angry drunk, who died pretty young from liver disease caused by his drinking. My cousin's been in and out of treatment for heroin addiction, and my mother has been trying to quit smoking for years. And now meth has caught my little brother.

I look at addiction as our own family monster, chasing us through the generations.

But we do have some power to stop the monster. We can choose not to start using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. For example, I decided when I was a teenager that I wasn't going to drink alcohol at all. I never liked the taste of it, and it seemed like a bad idea to try and get used to it anyway. And I could rely on my close friends and relatives to respect my decision and not push me to drink.

Addiction will always be a disease in my family. At least now we are more aware of it. And we make an effort to show each other and our kids we can have a good time without drugs. When the whole family gets together, we don't serve alcohol out of consideration for our many relatives in recovery. And we manage to entertain each other pretty well!

Learn more: [Read more](#) about Matt, his brother, and meth.

Learn how to help [prevent drug abuse](#).